



**PORTSMOUTH AND WINCHESTER
DIOCESAN ACADEMIES TRUST**



Off-site Activities Guidance

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Signed: _____

Chair of Governors

St Blasius C of E Primary Academy

Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Academies Trust

Off-site Activities Guidance

Revision Record

Revision No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1	8 th March 2016	AJ	E&S	New policy
2	October 2017	CW	Gov	Adopting new PWDAT policy
3	November 2019	CW	LGB	Reviewed policy



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Introduction

As part of the broad balance of curriculum and learning arrangements at St Blasius C of E Primary Academy, opportunity is frequently taken to enrich and enhance this through outdoor learning, outdoor education and educational visits and ventures. These guidelines outline the policies and operational procedures in these contexts.

Types of visits and ventures planned and used

- Various off-site activities planned for each year group during activities week.
- Various off-site activities planned to coincide with topics that are being learnt by year groups if appropriate.
- Year 6 residential trip.

Areas to consider:

- On-site, out-of-classroom activity.
- Local ventures.
- Away from base, day or part-day ventures (regular or occasional).
- Residential ventures.
- Hazardous activities.
- Visits abroad.
- Host families.

Organisation and Management

The 'EVC' is the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and at St Blasius C of E Primary Academy the EVC is Paul Attrill.

The EVC keeps up to date with training and national policy changes in all off-site activities.

This Off-site Activities Guidance supports all other academy policies but particularly teaching and learning, behaviour, health and safety, child protection and charging and remissions. Many straightforward visits are managed entirely in accordance with these policies and, apart from simple additional considerations the site and transportation of children and young people, are managed as they would be in school contexts. St Blasius C of E Primary Academy aims to take the ethos, culture and challenge to learning in school, into all of our outdoor learning and off-site contexts.

Copies of all academy policies can be found in the staff room policies folder, in addition to the academy website: www.stblasiusacademy.co.uk/policies

The Local Governing Body are kept informed of the overall policy and programme through this guidance document, as well as being given feedback on specific events and successful ventures via reports from the Principal, on at least a termly basis.

The Principal has the permission to approve off-site visits and activities of up to 1 day, (including cross Solent travel) in final form, at least two weeks prior to the visit. All forms and risk assessments must be completed for final permission to be given. Initial permission must be sought prior to informing parents and pupils of the visit. All forms are available on the resources section of the Trust website.

The permission of the Trust Board (via the Academies Officer) must be sought for any off-site visits and activities of more than 24 hours, are residential, or which involve a hazardous pursuit, or journey by air or sea (excluding cross Solent travel) in final form, at least six weeks prior to the visit. All forms and risk assessments must be completed for final permission to be given. Initial permission must be sought prior to informing parents and pupils of the visit. All forms are available on the resources section of the Trust website.

Each academy is responsible for checking the risk level when planning and before undertaking a trip. Below is general guidance for academy staff for every off-site activity due to current UK threat level: (SEVERE at the time of writing this guidance)

- Ensure that you have followed all procedures in this policy and have a clear timed programme of activities and locations, held by each person on the off-site visit and the home base contact.
- Ensure that programmes and supervision strategies are reviewed and amended if appropriate. It is particularly important to minimise the amount of 'free' or downtime during visits, and to ensure that appropriate supervision is in place throughout the entirety of the visit.
- Ensure that all staff and children are inducted in and understand the management and communication strategies in place for the visit. This should involve all staff having each other's mobile numbers.
- Ensure that all children know what to do in the event of any incident, or if individuals become separated.
- Consider possible safe areas or venues, near where you intend to be, that you could use as a meeting point or as an emergency shelter.
- Ensure all staff have a copy of the checklist in the event of an emergency.
- Contact your travel provider and discuss any specific advice, changes or actions they intend to implement or would recommend. If postponement to a later date is possible or appropriate, then it might be considered.
- Maintain an overview of the FCO travel website at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.
- Communicate with parents at the earliest opportunity to explain what you intend to do, and the actions being taken. Be clear that it is unlikely that either school or the travel insurance would be able to refund any costs incurred by parents withdrawing their child from a visit.

When visiting a major city or event, where the risk of attack may be greater so:

- Consider how you would get out of the city in an emergency, bearing in mind that the direct route and planned transport might no longer be an option and consider also the possibility of an enforced overnight stay. Are you aware of alternatives and can you access emergency funds to pay for them? Is there a reserve of any critical medication?
- Consider how your group would manage an enforced group split.
- Be vigilant and aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid congregating too long around entrances to major public sites.
- At ports and airports don't linger unnecessarily on the public side of security screening.

Outdoor visits are an essential and very positive part of teaching and learning within the curriculum. Statistically, they are very safe. Good management and professional decision making will help to ensure they remain so. Academy staff should be confident in continuing to access all appropriate outdoor educational opportunities.

Communicating with Parents

Parents are asked to keep the academy updated of any changes in details, including medical or circumstance. Parents are asked to complete a consent/return slip for each off-site visit.

For residential, overseas (not cross-Solent), hazardous or long distance ventures, specific forms will be completed by the academy. For ventures away from the academy, detailed written information will be sent to parents on transport, residential and overseas issues, and parents' specific consent will be requested. See 'informing parent and obtaining parental consent' below. A proforma is available to download from the resources section of the Trust website.

Information provided to parents will take into account the charging and remissions policy, requests for voluntary contributions and their rationale, method for collecting and recording contributions and money and how the funding collected represents costs and how the money is to be spent. A wording suggestion for voluntary contributions in letters is provided below:

We draw your attention to the Education Act 1988 regarding charges for educational visits. Under this Act, the academy may invite voluntary contributions in support of any activity. Such contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary. There is therefore, no obligation to contribute, though it is clear that if insufficient contributions are not forthcoming, the visit will not be financially viable. However no child will be omitted from the visit simply because you are unable or unwilling to contribute.

Informing parents and obtaining parental consent

Parents must be fully informed (in writing) about the proposed residential or hazardous trip before they are asked for their consent. This means that the academy should give parents information about the risks involved in the visit or activity, and the measures in place to minimise these risks.

Written information should normally include:

- The date and purpose of the visit.
- The departure and return times back to school.
- The collection point(s).
- The travel arrangements (and name of any travel company).
- Accommodation information (including security and supervision arrangements on site).
- What the provision for special educational or medical needs are.
- What the procedures are for children who fall ill.
- The name of the group leader, and the names of other staff and adults who will be present.
- Information about activities and the risks present and how they will be managed.
- What the insurance arrangements are for lost luggage, accidents, cancellations, medical cover, as well as any exclusions from policies and whether parents need to purchase additional cover.
- What clothing, footwear, equipment and money should be taken by children.
- Methods of payment, cancellation arrangements, deadlines and financial commitments and what the total cost of the visit will be.
- Advice on personal equipment (e.g. mobile phones, stereos).
- Information about sun screen – this can be used if the weather is sunny.
- Notice that the trip / some activities might be cancelled / adapted depending on the weather.
- Prohibited items should be clearly identified.

- The standards of behaviour expected of children (eg in relation to behaviour, discipline, and items which may not be taken on the trip).
- Parents should always be asked to sign a code of conduct form and informed of what the consequences will be if these standards are not met (eg withdrawal from activities and even asking parents to collect their child early in extreme cases).

Before the trip, parents should be asked to give authorisation in advance for any emergency treatment required by their child whilst on the trip, including anaesthetics or blood transfusions, should it be deemed necessary by medical authorities.

Insurance

Details on the off-site insurance policy held by the academy can be obtained from the School Business manager.

If the Group Leader/Principal is not sure if the activity or destination is covered by the insurance policy, or if the activity is deemed to be hazardous, please contact the Academies Finance Manager at the Trust for clarification.

Transport

A variety of transport is used for off-site activities which may include:

- Walking.
- Cross-Solent ferry travel to and from the Isle of Wight via Hovertravel, Red Funnel or Wightlink only.
- Buses (local, non-motorway travel).
- Coaches (through recognised suppliers).
- Trains (where appropriate or part of the learning in the venture).
- Minibus (for small group transport, eg choir, PE and sports teams, drama Group).

Parental cars will never be used to transport children, unless the academy requests and the parent agrees to transport their own child to and from a venue e.g. for a sporting event. The academy will not arrange for parents to transport children other than their own under any circumstances.

Academy staff cars may be used if the appropriate 'drivers form' has been completed and all checks including on business insurance, driving license, insurance, seatbelt and car seat safety etc have been completed by the academy. Two adults should always be present when transporting pupils by car unless there is a medical emergency.

Transportation by coach or minibus

Factors to be considered when planning and undertaking risk assessments for transport by coach or minibus include:

- Passenger safety.
- Competence level and training of the driver, and whether he or she has the correct license.
- Number of driving hours.
- Capacity and experience of the driver to maintain concentration (eg is more than one driver needed to avoid fatigue?).
- Type of journey (eg is it a local trip or long distance one?).
- Traffic conditions.
- Contingency funds and arrangements in case of a breakdown or an emergency.
- Insurance cover.
- The weather.

- Stopping points on long journeys.
- Supervision.

Minibuses and coaches must have seat belts fitted

The minimum requirement is for all children and young people between the ages of three and 16 years (but not including 16-year-olds) to be provided with a rear or forward-facing seat with a fitted lap belt in minibuses or coaches used to take them on organised trips, including journeys to and from the academy. The academy is advised to seek confirmation from coach operators that their vehicles are fitted with seat belts and check that every child has his or her seatbelt fastened before the coach sets off.

Seat belts and child restraints

Children aged three or more, up to a height of 135cm (approximately 4ft 5ins) or 12 years old, whichever they reach first, must travel in vehicles fitted with the correct seat. The driver is legally responsible for ensuring that this occurs. This includes academy staff who transport students in their own vehicles for off-site visits. See 'Transport' section above. For those children who are over 135 cm in height or who have reached their 12th birthday, adult seat belts must be worn in the front and rear seats, if available.

Supervision

Off-site visit adult-children ratios are dependent upon the activity, means of travel, location to be visited, weather and needs of the specific children and staff undertaking the visit, as informed by risk assessment. Ratios and risk assessments are agreed as part of the planning process and may be adapted to changing circumstances prior to and during the visit.

For trips to local sites, museums etc. ratios are recommended to be a minimum of:

Early Years' Pupils 1:4

Pupils in Years 1-3 1:6

Pupils in Years 4-6 1:8

There must always be a minimum of two adults and trips involving hazardous activities will normally require a much higher ratio than for trips that do not. A suitably qualified person should always be appointed as a group leader. It is not recommended that unqualified teachers or LSAs are group leaders.

This policy recommends that at least one female adult and one male adult should accompany a mixed-sex group, and that at a minimum of one of the supervising adults, has completed a first aid qualification. Please also see the Smoking Policy for information on school trip ratios and managing smoking breaks.

Inclusion

St Blasius C of E primary Academy is an inclusive school. For further details please see the academy's Single Equalities Policy.

Different kinds of activities may be offered to children as detailed below:

- An activity provided as part of the National Curriculum or a formal course, that is a statutory requirement. This will be funded by the academy. Inclusion of all is required.
- Ventures where comprehensive coverage, for example a whole class or group, is desirable but suitable alternatives are available at school. National Curriculum and similar entitlement is not lost as this is an enhancement or enrichment activity. Inclusion of all is desired but not required. Choice or other factors may mean that not all attend.

- Enhancement or enrichment activity that is a clear choice or extra – optional. Choice and other factors will mean that not all attend.

Every reasonable step will be made to include all children in off-site activities. However, if those reasonable steps and risk assessment cannot ensure the safety of a child and/or that of others, then a child may not be able to attend that particular venture. See behaviour, exclusion and single equalities policies for further information.

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding and Child protection policy applies equally to all off-site activities, including residential. In particular:

- Guidance on acceptable behaviour and avoiding unnecessary contact is included.
- Suitable 'employment' checks are made on volunteers and other responsible adults who support these ventures in line with guidance.
- Where external providers or outdoor centres are used, instructors credentials, qualifications and safeguarding checks are qualified by the academy.
- Management checks are in place.
- A qualified first aider and full first aid kit should be taken on all off-site activities.

Volunteers

St Blasius C of E Primary Academy may take parents and other adults who are not members of staff to help out on visits. The role of these volunteers should be made clear, they must be told who they are responsible to and whether (and if so, when) they can act alone without support from a member of staff. It should also be ensured that the insurance arrangements for the visit cover volunteers.

All volunteers are subject to checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Those involved in a 'regulated activity' must also register. 'Regulated activity' is defined as that involving contact with children or vulnerable adults once a month or more, or where an activity takes place for at least three days in any 30 day period or overnight (between 2.00am and 6.00am).

Risk and Benefit Assessment

As part of planning an off-site activity, a proposal form will be completed and submitted to the Principal for any and all off-site activities prior to the event. The following procedures will also be followed:

- An analysis of the benefits of the activity translated into clear objectives and Expectation.
- An assessment of the risk of harm and its likelihood is made, including: the type of activity, the age/competence/fitness/usual standard of behaviour of the children, any special educational/medical needs of students, adult: child ratios, the competence/experience/qualifications of the adults, modes of transport, journey routes and location(s) of visits, emergency procedures. See visit/site specific risk assessment section below. Clear control measures will be put in place so that risks can be satisfactorily managed. Risk assessment templates are available to download in the resources section on the Trust website.
- Risk assessments should consider the risks inherent in the activities to be undertaken and will involve an examination of issues outlined above, identifying the precautions necessary to ensure that risks to health are minimised.

A pre-visit by key staff is considered an essential part of reviewing the location and its ability to realise the benefits and be managed. Very well-known and used sites may be checked by contacting key personnel prior to re-visiting and web-based information is increasingly available and useful. Consider involving children in the planning of the visit and risk assessments, so that they are better prepared, will make more informed decisions and be less at risk.

Visit/site specific risk assessments

These consider the risks associated with the particular visit/site, which might include:

- The medical needs of staff and children – supplies of medication and contingency plans if an adult has to accompany a student to hospital.
- Behaviour of children – control measures include a code on rules and behaviour.
- Weather conditions – control measures include obtaining local information about tides, potential for flooding and the likelihood of sudden weather changes.

The assessment should always have a pre-assessed 'plan b' for contingencies. For example, what is the 'plan b' if your coach breaks down abroad?

Risk assessments should also be ongoing and dynamic. A reassessment of the risks should be made while the visit is taking place and as the need arises. Risks may need to be reassessed in the light of changing weather, new safety warnings, illnesses, behavioural problems or emergencies.

Activities in or near water

Fatalities in educational visits have tended to occur when children are involved in activities in or near water. Government guidance on group safety around water stresses the importance of completing risk assessments which should take account of:

- The competence of the group leader and the other adults who will be present.
- Adult: children ratios.
- Potential hazards, identified through an exploratory visit if possible, or by obtaining as much information as possible by other means.
- The likelihood of someone falling in the water.
- Underwater hazards (eg. rocks or strong currents).
- Getting the group in and out of water easily.
- Changes in weather.
- Tidal conditions.

Beach visits should not include paddling or swimming, unless a lifeguard is present. Group leaders should also have a range of alternative plans in place if arrangements need to be changed for any reason.

Outdoor activity centres

Centres that organise caving, climbing, trekking or water sports for people under the age of 18 must by law be licensed and regularly inspected by the [Adventure Activities Licensing Service](#). The inspection looks in detail at a range of issues including equipment, staff competence and qualifications, and accident and emergency procedures.

The AALS website has advice for group leaders about adventure trips and can put you in touch with a registered activity supplier.

Farm visits

Risks assessments on the taking of children to farms should include hazards associated with E coli 0157 and other infections as well as those arising from the misuse of farm equipment. Precautionary measures include:

- Making sure that children wear appropriate outdoor shoes and clothing.
- Covering cuts and grazes on hands with waterproof dressing.
- Never allowing children to kiss animals or place their faces against them.
- Ensuring that children wash their hands thoroughly before and after eating, after any contact with animals and again before leaving the farm.
- Making sure that children do not use or pick up tools (eg. spades and forks) unless permitted to do so by farm staff and that they do not ride on tractors or other machines.

If a member of the group shows signs of ill health after farm visit, they should consult a doctor as soon as possible and explain that they have been in recent contact with animals.

Incidents and Emergencies

- A mobile phone and up to date staff and pupil emergency contact lists, including medical details, must be taken on every off-site visit and held by all adults confidentially. At the end of the visit these details should be collected in by the group leader and shredded. A proforma is available on the resources section of the Trust website.
- As a minimum, Group Leaders should be fully conversant with the academy Emergency Plan and the checklist in the event of an accident provided below. The model emergency plan is available on the policy page of the Trust website.
- If an overnight stay is involved in the off-site activity, the fire safety and evacuation plan for the building should be checked. Consider carrying out a fire drill shortly after arrival.
- All first aid treatments must be recorded and the information retained with the academy's records upon return to school. A recording form is available from the resources section of the Trust website. Parents should be informed of any treatments that their child has received in accordance with the academy's policy
- Any concerns or 'near-misses' are recorded and discussed to consider changing strategies and reported to the Principal and where applicable, or if the information is useful, the Academies Officer. A recording form is available from the resources section of the Trust website.

Checklist in the event of an accident

The immediate action checklist for group leaders during a visit:

- Establishing the nature and extent of emergency promptly.
- Ensuring that everyone in the group is safe.
- Establishing the names of casualties and arranging immediate medical attention.
- Ensuring a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital, providing doctors with any relevant medical information.
- Notifying the police if necessary.
- Informing the academy home base contact and provider/tour operator so that the emergency plan can be enacted.
- Contacting the academy with the following information: the nature, date and time of the incident; where it happened; names of casualties and information about their injuries; what has been done so far and action yet to be taken.
- Notifying the British Embassy or Consulate if an incident occurs abroad.

- Ensuring that the academy notify parents and, normally, insurers.
- Writing down what happened promptly, noting witnesses and preserving vital evidence, ascertaining phone numbers for future calls.
- Keeping an account of events, times and contacts after any incident.
- Completing an accident report as soon as possible (serious accidents or incidents involving violence may need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive).
- Referring any media enquiries to the named contact in the academy emergency plan only – never speak to the media directly.
- Avoid discussions about legal liability.
- Keeping receipts of costs incurred in the emergency (for the insurers).

Please see the resources section of the Trust website to download all forms, templates and proformas referred to in this policy.